

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

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1. A method for displaying information to a user of a computer system, said method comprising the steps of:
 - activating a computerized information system;
 - dynamically generating a table of contents in response to said activation;
 - and
 - displaying said dynamically generated table of contents;
 - wherein said computer system displays an up-to-date listing of available information.
 2. The method according to claim 1 wherein said step of dynamically generating comprises the steps of:
 - indexing each file and book of a predetermined folder for files of a first type; and
 - scanning said files of a first type for at least one HTML meta-tag of a second type in order to determine data to be added to said table of contents.
 3. The method according to claim 2 wherein said files of a first type are text files having a predetermined creator designation.
 4. The method according to claim 2 wherein said at least one HTML meta-tag is a meta-tag for providing a title.
 5. The method according to claim 2 wherein said predetermined folder is a folder that is uniquely associated with a help system.

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6. A method for providing a dynamically generated table of contents upon activation of a computerized information help system, said method comprising the steps of:

5 indexing each file and a first level of each book of a predetermined folder for files of a first type;

scanning said files of a first type for at least one HTML meta-tag of a second type in order to determine first data to be added to a first table of contents;

generating said first table of contents using said first data;

formatting said first table of contents using a template; and

10 displaying said formatted first table of contents.

7. The method according to claim 6 wherein said predetermined folder is a folder that is uniquely associated with a help system.

8. The method according to claim 6 wherein said files of a first type are text files having a predetermined creator designation.

15 9. The method according to claim 6 wherein said at least one HTML meta-tag is a meta-tag for providing a title.

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10 The method according to claim 6 further comprising the steps of:
indexing each chapter within each book of said predetermined folder for files of a first type;

20 scanning said files of a first type of each book for at least one HTML meta-tag of a second type in order to determine second data to be added to a table of contents for each book; and

dynamically generating a table of contents for each book using said second data.

11. The method according to claim 10 further comprising the step of formatting said table of contents for each book using an HTML template.

12. The method according to claim 11 further comprising the step of providing said formatted second table of contents for each book in response to a request.

13. The method according to claim 6 wherein said formatted first table comprises at least one link to a location of a file on the computer system.

14. The method according to claim 6 wherein said formatted first table of contents comprises at least one link to a web page on the Internet.

15. The method according to claim 6 further comprising the step of:
determining, in response to the activation of said information help system, whether a table of contents needs to be generated.

16. The method according to claim 15 wherein said step of determining further comprises the steps of:

determining whether a table of contents for said help system already exists;
determining, if said table of contents already exists, whether said table of contents is up-to-date; and
determining that a table of contents needs to be generated when said table of contents fails to either exist or be up-to-date.

17. The method according to claim 16 wherein said step of determining whether the table of contents is up-to-date comprises the steps of:

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comparing a modification date of files to be used in the generation of said first table of contents and a date in which the table of contents was last generated; and

5 determining that said table of contents is not up-to-date when said modification date is more recent than said generation date.

18. A method for displaying a dynamically generated table of contents of a computerized information help system, said method comprising the steps of:

activating said help system;
 10 determining whether a table of contents for said help system already exists;
 determining, if said table of contents already exists, whether said table of contents is up-to-date;
 dynamically generating a table of contents when said table of contents fails to either exist or be up-to-date; and
 displaying said dynamically generated table of contents.

15 19. The method according to claim 18 wherein said step of determining whether the table of contents is up-to-date comprises the steps of:

comparing a modification date of files to be used in the generation of said table of contents and a date in which the table of contents was last generated; and
 20 determining that said table of contents is not up-to-date when said modification date is more recent than said generation date.

20. The method according to claim 18 wherein said step of dynamically generating comprises the steps of:

indexing each file and book of a predetermined folder for files of a first type; and

21. The method according to claim 20 wherein said files of a first type are text files having a predetermined creator designation.
22. The method according to claim 20 wherein said at least one HTML meta-tag is a meta-tag for providing a title.
23. The method according to claim 20 wherein said predetermined folder is a folder that is uniquely associated with a help system.
24. An apparatus for displaying information to a user of a computer system, said apparatus comprising:
a viewer for dynamically generating a list of books currently available to the user; and
a display device for displaying said list of currently available books;
wherein said viewer dynamically generates said list of books in response to a request.
25. The apparatus according to claim 24 wherein said viewer generates said list of books by indexing each file and book of a predetermined folder for files of a first type and scanning said files of a first type for at least one HTML meta-tag of a second type in order to determine data to be added to said list of books.
26. The apparatus according to claim 25 wherein said files of a first type are text files having a predetermined creator designation.

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means for indexing each chapter within each book of said predetermined folder for files of a first type;

means for scanning said files of a first type of each book for at least one HTML meta-tag of a second type in order to determine second data to be added to a table of contents for each book; and

means for dynamically generating a table of contents for each book using said second data.

34. The system according to claim 33 further comprising means for formatting said table of contents for each book using an HTML template.

35. The system according to claim 34 further comprising means for displaying said formatted second table of contents for each book in response to a request.

36. The system according to claim 29 wherein said formatted first table comprises at least one link to a location of a file on the computer system.

37. The system according to claim 29 wherein said formatted first table of contents comprises at least one link to a web page on the Internet.

38. The system according to claim 29 further comprising:
means for determining, in response to the activation of said information help system, whether a table of contents needs to be generated.

39. The system according to claim 38 wherein said means for determining further comprises:

means for determining whether a table of contents for said help system already exists;

~~means for determining that a table of contents needs to be generated when said table of contents fails to either exist or be up-to-date.~~

means for comparing a modification date of files to be used in the generation of said first table of contents and a date in which the table of contents was last generated; and

41. A computer-readable medium containing a program which performs the steps of:

displaying said dynamically generated table of contents;
wherein said dynamically generated table of contents is an up-to-date listing of available information.

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indexing each file and book of a predetermined folder for files of a first type; and

25 scanning said files of a first type for at least one HTML meta-tag of a second type in order to determine data to be added to said table of contents.

43. The computer-readable medium according to claim 42 wherein said files of a first type are text files having a predetermined creator designation.

44. The computer-readable medium according to claim 42 wherein said at least one HTML meta-tag is a meta-tag for providing a title.

5 45. The computer-readable medium according to claim 42 wherein said predetermined folder is a folder that is uniquely associated with a help system.

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10 46. A computer-readable medium containing a program which performs the steps of:

indexing each file and a first level of each book of a predetermined folder for files of a first type;

scanning said files of a first type for at least one HTML meta-tag of a second type in order to determine first data to be added to a first table of contents;

generating said first table of contents using said first data;

formatting said first table of contents using a template; and

15 displaying said formatted first table of contents.

47. The computer-readable medium according to claim 46 wherein said predetermined folder is a folder that is uniquely associated with a help system.

48. The computer-readable medium according to claim 46 wherein said files of a first type are text files having a predetermined creator designation.

20 49. The computer-readable medium according to claim 46 wherein said at least one HTML meta-tag is a meta-tag for providing a title.

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50. The computer-readable medium according to claim 46 further comprising the steps of:

indexing each chapter within each book of said predetermined folder for files of a first type;

5 scanning said files of a first type of each book for at least one HTML meta-tag of a second type in order to determine second data to be added to a table of contents for each book; and

dynamically generating a table of contents for each book using said second data.

10 51. The computer-readable medium according to claim 50 further comprising the step of formatting said table of contents for each book using an HTML template.

15 52. The computer-readable medium according to claim 51 further comprising the step of providing said formatted second table of contents for each book in response to a request.

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53. The computer-readable medium according to claim 46 wherein said formatted first table comprises at least one link to a location of a file on a computer system.

20 54. The computer-readable medium according to claim 46 wherein said formatted first table of contents comprises at least one link to a web page on the Internet.

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55. The method according to claim 15 wherein said step of determining further comprises the step of:

